THE FRONTIER

A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

EDITED BY
PHILIP MAIRET AND ALEC VIDLER

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OF RELIGION

APRIL 1952
Vol. III No. 4

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FIGHTING INFLATION

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THE
FRONTIER
A CHRISTIAN COMMENTARY ON THE COMMON LIFE

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HOLBROOK LIBRARY PACIFIC SCHOOL OF RELIGION

Monthly Letter

Education in Berlin

The place of religious instruction in the secular educational systems of modern States, which in all of them presents questions of growing importance, comes to a burning focus in Berlin, and there the challenge has produced a Christian response of peculiar significance. As there is no topic upon which Christians of different nations can more usefully exchange views or have greater need for mutual understanding, we are glad to publish an article upon this Berlin movement by one of its most influential leaders. Although it makes points of principle that are vital wherever the question arises, this is a statement about a unique local situation.

It must be remembered that the tradition in Germany was that religion was a compulsory subject in public schools, taught at the State's expense, Roman Catholic or Evangelical instruction being optional. The underlying, though latterly rather shadowy, assumption was that Christianity was the established religion in State education, and that its cultural values pervaded the whole. After the war, the Nazis having corrupted and then replaced this basis by their own ideology, it was a question whether to restore the official status of Christian teaching or frankly to secularize education, giving teachers and pupils freedom to teach and study in the light

of Christian doctrine, or from any other point of view consistent with the requirements of the subjects in the curriculum. Generally, the Social Democrats wanted the secular school and the Christian Democrats stood for Christian cultural education. In West Germany the latter has prevailed even in provinces controlled by the S.D.P., who have repudiated any exclusive dependence on the Marxist ideology and admit socialists of different faiths and backgrounds. Religion thus becomes compulsory in schools and taught by state teachers, chiefly under Catholic, but also under Evangelical influences.

In Berlin things have moved the opposite way. A radical Social Democrat government came to power in West Berlin just after the war, and neither the East Germany Communists nor the Russians would sponsor or pay for religion in the schools. They would only allow it to those who asked for it (as nearly all nominally evangelical children do) and give space and time for this up to two hours a week. The authorities of the East and West sectors who have since agreed on nothing else, did agree on this as common school law for all Berlin—the only law still governing the whole city. By this, the Churches, Catholic and Evangelical, are invited to provide instructors for the two hours allowed, and they do so. Naturally the working-out is different in the east and in the west areas. When Communism is in control all subjects have to be somehow related to its ideology, not excluding religious teaching, which moreover is often hindered or embarrassed in other ways. But in West Berlin, the solution has been implemented with sincerity, and by the Evangelical Church it has also been welcomed with conviction.

The Case for Consideration

Now, after four years the Christian and the Free Democrats, having a narrow majority in the Senate, want to end the present school law in this respect and re-establish the older tradition of a Christian orientation with compulsory

religious instruction, by teachers taken into State employment. Most church-going parents in West Berlin favour this. But it is vigorously opposed by the leadership of the Evangelical Church of Berlin-Brandenburg and especially by Director Lokies, upon the grounds of principle set forth in his article. There is also the consideration, shared by those concerned with him, that they have been able through their work under the school law, to establish better relations with the Social Democrats on a new basis of mutual understanding, relations that would be destroyed if the Church now took the political opportunity to re-institute religious schooling on the earlier lines. What they have therefore demanded, and obtained of the city government, is that any state support for school teachers of religion should be given to the Church for its educational work in the schools, without any strings attached, and that the idea of a general Christian world-view as a basis for public schooling should be abandoned.

Director Lokies' argument amounts to more than the defence of a special solution in a local case. The situation that has been regulated in this way is one that is becoming more difficult in every modern country, and the principle he advocates may well deserve to be entertained on its merits elsewhere. Behind the argument of his article, it is true, there are principles and assumptions that are more deeply controversial, which some will be tempted too readily to dismiss as based on a conception of the "autonomy of the secular", connected in their minds with other German ideas in both religion and philosophy, which Western and Latin religious thought has never been able to accept. We would plead, on this point, for the suspension of a prejudice we may share. After all, this is a movement which has arisen out of an existing situation and a costly action to deal with it. The task was nearly impossible for the impoverished Church to undertake, for it involved the training and support of religious teachers for nearly 300,000 Berlin schoolchildren. Bishop Dibelius charged Pastor Lokies, Director of the

Gossner Mission, with the organization and management of all the religious instructional work in Berlin, because that Mission had had practical experience of meeting the need before, when the Nazis had ruined religious teaching in the schools. It was now commissioned to establish a special training college, and the faculty of religious school-teaching has been developed under its professional guidance—financed at first by gifts alone, and later assisted by the Landeskirche. In addition, the Church has erected a few experimental schools which it regards as " pilot plants " for the work in the public schools, and research stations for defining the relations of the faith to the various subjects of the curriculum.

* * * * *

What does it mean to us ?

The place now given to religion in our own national schools is in some ways not unlike that of the Berlin plan ; but less sharply defined in so far as the " agreed syllabus " makes it non-denominational. We have no such tradition of conflict to overcome between religion on one side, and the State and secular learning on the other. The edges are softened by the existence in our society of co-operative associations of many kinds. (As a West European friend put it, " You in Britain still have that thing called ' society ', while we have only the Church and the State, and chaos between ".) But the religious issue may well sharpen if values continue to disintegrate in society at large ; we may be approaching a situation more similar to that of Berlin, and to those of mission schools where there are rival religions. The implication is that the kind of school Christians should most favour under present conditions is not one in which Christian ideas are formally established and everything harmoniously contrived to protect them, but a school in which there is full freedom for personal Christian witness under conditions corresponding to those of the world in which we have to live. We have heard of a mission school

in the East, where a change from the former policy to the latter, giving Buddhist teachers equal freedom to teach, brought a new vitality into its Christian teaching.

Whether or not the principles expounded by Director Lokies are as universally important as they are interesting, they represent something we must take into account if we are ever to come to a true understanding with our fellow Christians in Germany, and indeed with Germans generally. And we have plenty to learn from the spirit and intelligence with which many in that country are now taking up the responsibilities and rights of which they had been long deprived.

Education by Television

The announcement that television programmes for secondary schools would start experimentally on May 5th, drew from the Archbishop of Canterbury a warning that this could be a major disaster for education. His admonition was not on the whole well received. Those in favour of the innovation pointed out that sound radio has been from the first under the direction of representatives from the teaching profession; that programmes have been well designed to help, and not to do without, the teacher in the school; and that television will be just as carefully introduced by experts of the same kind. No doubt this is so. It seems also to be true that we live in a world where, for at least a long while to come, every instrument that scientific brilliance can invent will be almost automatically and irresistibly applied, as promptly and on as large a scale as possible: so that in education, as in so much else, the race between technical progress and human adaptation to it will have to be run, without assurance that it will be won. All the same, we do not think the Archbishop was just being tiresome and reactionary. There are certainly vital values at stake.

Suppose, for example, telepedagogy (if we may coin the word) should ever, on the score of cheapness and convenience, claim the major portion of school time. Would

that have no adverse effect upon the status and performance of the teaching profession? We cannot help thinking of some words in a moving lecture given at Dartmouth College in the U.S.A. by that great teacher Eugen Rosenstock-Huessy—not about television, but about William James, himself a great influence in American education, who found his vocation afresh through personal contact with his French philosophical teacher Renouvier. Any inspiring education, said Professor Rosenstock-Huessy, is propagation—and propagation is quite unlike that sad substitute for it, propaganda. "Good *is* not, except by propagation; it is not in any man, but originates only between teacher and student, as between father and son, or between a Renouvier and a James. The gifts of the spirit, the fertility of enthusiasm, the fecundity of thought, the influence of authority, are all inter-human processes which spring to life only between persons."

Has there ever been much teaching like this in national compulsory education? We should say there has always been some, and that what there is is always precious. May it never be forgotten by those who have the hard job of assessing the results of this experiment in television.

* * * * *

Inflation: in France—

The fight against inflation goes very badly in France, and not too well in Britain, although some fairly vigorous measures were taken last month. There is no sharper test of national unity, for inflation can be checked only by measures that will reduce incomes for a time, and may give rise to demands for exemption or compensation that would defeat the end in view. Much depends upon the respect felt by the people for the rights of the state in economic matters. For lack of this, one French government after another breaks down before its task, for theirs is a country where evasions of income tax are estimated to cost the revenue the equivalent of about £600 millions a year,

and the executive can never muster enough authority firmly to collect taxes by such measures as are effective, e.g., in Britain. In France people do not over-estimate the powers of government, but undervalue them. To keep financial order is an immense economic service which good government can render, but which the French people will not suffer it to perform, because they will not take the responsibility themselves. Only last autumn[1] the Paris weekly *Réforme* published an article girding against the growth of governmental oppression, totalitarianism and regimentation (things not obvious to the naked eye in France) and vigorously condoning, if not advocating, tax evasion and the black market as the one means of defence left to the people, a necessary protest of life against forces of encroaching death. The writer was not only a University Professor of Law but a very active Christian ! Nor is his point of view particularly rare in France.

—and in Britain

Britain is certainly better governed and its people more governable, but the rift between what statesmen must see is needed and what they dare enact is often wide enough. The ingenious Budget introduced by the new Conservative Chancellor has been highly praised because it makes the best it can of both worlds, combining some salutary measures (or half-measures) with a good deal of superficial encouragement. Substantially to reduce the food subsidies that make food deceptively cheap, and to make credit dear by raising the bank rate, were measures supposed in advance to require enormous political courage ; and Mr. Butler contrived to do both by complaisantly helping artisan and middle-class incomes at the same time. For weeks before, responsible economic journals had been clamorous for a really brave reduction of the personal spending-power that the Budget after all increased ; at least a few thoughtful citizens, worked

[1] Oct. 15th, 1951.

up by these arguments and ready to face a loss of say twenty pounds of income for their country's good, cannot have been altogether gratified to get a present instead. Anything that helps to dispel the gloomy fear that taxation will now increase forever is indeed welcome: but this increase of money will go in rising prices and, if the economists are right, raise them further—a point which was rather concealed. And, granting that the politicians know their own business best in this respect, and that the jam was necessary for the powder to be taken, it is still to be seen whether the dose will effect a cure—i.e., whether it will save the value of the pound, and with it the great banking area of sterling centred in London, upon which depends our ability to keep up employment and to earn even our present reduced diet.

The Facts behind the Food Prices

From this point of view, in which the maintenance of export trade is so essential, it is doubtless a good thing to have given incentive and encouragement to the industrial workers ; but not so good to have lowered the prospects of other classes whose contributions to export initiative and other risks of enterprise are equally indispensable. Except miners and farmers, few of our workers are in the strict sense producers, nearly all are processors whose work depends on materials imported from a world where supplies are increasingly competed for, and where the need for risk-taking initiative is rising steeply. The action of Australia and South Africa in reducing their imports from Britain has shown us that even within the sterling area, indeed from the very effort to hold it together, some trade may be closed to us. It is true of the contemporary world in general, that the countries which have been the most receptive markets now want to process their own materials rather than send them to us, and not to sell the food they raise but eat it. Equipment to achieve that end is what they most want from Western industrial cities and although—fortunately for us—most of them still have far to go and must for a long time

still supply many things we need, there are others which we shall have progressively to provide for ourselves or else go without. Of these the most necessary—food—is also the most within our power to produce, though that will take time and will demand, at first, very costly effort.

This is the challenge that we, as a nation, show most reluctance to face. We have just had another proof how difficult, if not impossible, it is to evade the problem by expecting the government itself to turn farmer and raise food in distant lands. After the failure of the African schemes (ground-nuts and eggs) the great ranching enterprise in Australia has also come to nothing. Agriculture is a primary industry that cannot be expanded by government fiat; like the living things it has to cultivate, it has to grow from its own roots. In old, civilized states at any rate, the only way to increase the productivity of the land is to assist the existing rural communities and families, building on their own traditions to develop and intensify their husbandry, to develop marginal land and attract others into the same way of life. This has been well demonstrated elsewhere, and there is no real reason why Britain, whose agriculture remains, in spite of all, one of the best in the world, cannot do the same. In face of the great realities governing our situation, there is something irrelevant about so much preoccupation with monetary distribution between the Peters and Pauls; when the raising of seven-eighths instead of two-thirds of Britain's food at home would provide a safer foundation for its essential foreign trade than either fiscal policy or international trade conferences can ever bring to pass.

INTERIM

When this column was announcing its removal to 12 Kingly Street it emitted a parenthetical sigh at not getting more letters from readers. This ejaculation has moved quite a number more than usual to send in remarks, critical and otherwise, upon our work, to our benefit and gratitude. One of these correspondents says the remedy is simple—just keep on reminding them. He encloses his copy of *The Frontier*'s original prospectus, on which he has marked the sentences that decided him to subscribe, including, e.g.:

> " *The Frontier* is especially concerned with those fields of action and responsibility in which lay men and women spend the greater part of their time. . . . Different minds can help one another to see what the important questions are . . . and where concerted action is possible . . . it will therefore need many collaborators . . . with too passive a public the work cannot prosper . . . a considerable contribution both to the contents and to the editorial thinking is intended to be made by the readers . . . *The Frontier* is designed to provide scope for the widest possible communication of this kind . . . between Christians separated in their ecclesiastical or political allegiance or uncertain where their allegiance lies, but . . . seeking the will of God along diverse ways of thought and experiment."

This original manifesto of the Editors is not raked up in evidence against them : looking back over the interval since its appearance, we think most readers would say that it broadly describes what *The Frontier* has been doing. In some ways the working-out has been different from what the Editors expected—less occasional correspondence and controversy, for instance, has been published than was anticipated. But the amount of background consultation and correspondence that goes into the work is great for the size of the journal, and is hardly realized by the readers in general, not even by all those who contribute to the final product. When they do have a comment or suggestion to make and remember to do so, they can be sure their letters are attentively read and taken into account.

* * * *

A Prophet in his own Country

Admirers of the Berdyaev affectionately remembered in Mr. Eric Fenn's article this month (p.148) might be interested if they could read the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia's* entry under BERDYAEV, Nicholas Alexandrovitch (1874–1948). It is couched, of course, in the contemptuous phraseology used by that compilation when it refers to religion (nearly always as a moribund delusion) or to religious thinkers. He is described as a " reactionary ", " White emigrant " who fought against Marxism and hated the Socialist order. We are told that

> " In 1924 Berdyaev's religious mystic ravings were to the taste of the West European reactionaries, and he became one of the recognized leaders of the most arrant form of idealistic obscurantism—religious existentialism. His mystic nonsense was accepted and supported by the most reactionary philosophers of imperialism, enemies of science, progress and democracy."

The truth is that Berdyaev at first took up rather an affirmative attitude to the Revolution, qualified by his intuitive perception of the fallacy of materialism, and above all of the peril to liberty and the human spirit. Far from being a " White " or an " emigrant " the Bolsheviks expelled him in 1922, forcing him to sign his own condemnation to be shot if he should ever return.

* * * *

The Cinema

Since the year began, two films of outstanding interest to at least some of our readers have been shown in London. One of these—*Isle of Sinners*, an English version of *Dieu a besoin des hommes*—is a masterpiece hardly second to *Monsieur Vincent* and of no less deeply religious interest. The other is the long-awaited screen version of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*, with the Rev. Fr. John Groser as Becket, and though not in the same class as cinema, this is a beautiful picture of the play and a superb rendering of the poetry.

Will these pictures have any adequate circulation in the rest of the kingdom ? The mediocrity, from any but a technical point of view, of the general output of the film industry is apt to be unrelieved, in local cinemas, by the occasional achievements of special excellence which do get some showing in the metropolis. One is told that local cinema proprietors would often risk the presentation of such distinguished work if their patrons asked for it : and we seem to have heard that some laymen, with a knowledge of the arts and realization of their importance, have tried to combine their efforts to take action in this sense. If so, we should like to know with what success.

The Advance of Medicine

The annual cost of the National Health Services has just exceeded £400 millions, and the Government has raised the small proportion payable by the patients to £23 millions. But the discovery of more effective means of combating disease and of prolonging old age by medical science proceeds apace, and the methods grow more costly. The great idea of placing all the resources of medicine at every citizen's disposal was that it could give us a nation in magnificent health, but there are some unexpected results. It is now being said that, besides maintaining a high proportion of the population in what has been called a state of "medicated survival", the progress of scientific research and its application *ad libitum* makes more and more medical work to do. It is perhaps early to raise alarm about this. But there is a case for examining the assumptions on which this remarkable social experiment was based. The practical issue, however, is whether the benefits can be kept from deteriorating soon and rapidly, unless everyone is kept aware of their social cost by having to pay more directly for them.

* * * *

The Point about Frontier Luncheons

Human beings are temperamentally divided on the question of entering into conversation with strangers in, e.g., railway carriages. No blame attaches to those who prefer to keep themselves to themselves, nor do even the garrulous, unless excessively so, incur moral censure. Happily, at Frontier Luncheons everyone is expected to be sociable, since all are readers of *The Frontier*; no one is therefore a complete stranger and there is prevenient matter for conversation. No newcomer need be shy of introducing himself, since the point of the luncheon period before the address is that the Council members should be able to make personal contact with the readers and the readers with one another.

The possibility of holding Frontier Luncheons sometimes in provincial centres has been under consideration and may yet be realized.

* * * *

The last Frontier Luncheon of this season will be on Wednesday, 23rd April, in the Queen Mary Hall, when Mr. K. G. Grubb will speak on "Publicity and the Impact of Christianity". Tickets (3s. 6d.), which must be obtained not later than April 21st, can be had from the Christian Frontier, 8 The Cloisters, Windsor Castle.

EDUCATIONAL POLICY IN BERLIN

The Church's Contribution

I. The Challenge of the Hour

Whether one thinks it was a disaster or a unique opportunity, Berlin had the chance to start from scratch again after the end of the war. In Western Germany, things were different. There the policy was to restore pre-war conditions as far as possible, with the result that already, in certain fields including educational policy, affairs have got more or less completely into a rut. Even the churches can hardly make a move of their own accord and are almost debarred from contributing to a progressive solution of the educational problem. They can only try to make the best of the situation as they find it.

In contrast to Western Germany, church and school in Berlin have put their relations on a completely new footing. Whatever opinion one may hold of the Berlin Education Law which emerged from the situation that was forced on the city, it has confronted the Church with quite new tasks by placing all religious education in its hands. The fact that religious instruction is given in the schools by representatives of the Church has produced and is producing a relationship full of tension, but one that is both fruitful and genuine. Bishop Lilje has said that he would have championed religious instruction as organized in Berlin in his own diocese, if only he had had one thing at his disposal: the assurance given to the Church in Berlin by the services of its religious instructors. The small number of newly founded Evangelical schools must also be reckoned with as a factor in the relationship between church and school that cannot be bargained out of existence. It would be wrong to compare the function these new experimental schools fulfil in the structure of the public educational system with the quite different kind of significance of the

teaching clergy. The foundation of these schools is part of the public mission of the Church and carries its influence far beyond its own borders.

Political life in Berlin is dominated by the effort to be as like Western Germany as possible. The Church must not watch this process uncritically. The restoration of the *ancien régime* is not necessarily the only possible way to progress and improvement, and not every innovation calls to be rejected because it has not yet stood the test of time. The challenge to the Church of the present situation in Berlin is to watch lest a meretricious solution should prevent a more promising and lasting settlement. The Church in Berlin has the chance of making a contribution to educational policy in the direction advocated by leading religious educationists in Western Germany.

II. The Basic Conception

To understand our educational situation it is imperative to grasp one point at least in the total problem of which it is part: the problem of denominationalism (*Konfessionalitaet*) In order to avoid the suspicion of subjectivism I shall quote from a book on *The Educationalist as Christian* by a West German thinker, Helmuth Kittel. The answer Kittel gives to this all-important question is being supported in increasing measure in the educational literature of the Evangelical Church, above all in Western Germany, and we may note that it reproduces the basic conception of Church educational policy in Berlin with astonishing accuracy. He writes:

> "What is the all-important difference between what is usually still called a 'confessional school' and a school which, as we now say, lives 'under the Gospel?' It lies in the way in which the relation between the Gospel and the world is defined. The traditional confessional school is characterized by a programme which aims at Christianizing the secular subjects of the curriculum. Whether the programme is Evangelical or Catholic is beside the point. In sharp opposition to this, the school living 'under the Gospel' knows that

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the Gospel is always the Word of God imparted to teachers and pupils alike, and no mere *Weltanschauung* which can be expressed in human terms. There is therefore no attempt to ' Christianize ' the secular subjects. It is held, rather, that the Gospel can free them from all infiltration of human ideology and enable them to be truly secular. In the traditional sense the confessional school is a *Weltanschauung*-school and therefore the opposite of a school that really listens to the *viva vox evangelii*. An Evangelical Christian can never be an out and out supporter of the confessional school.

" This fundamental difference between the type of school we have in mind and a confessional school in the traditional sense is also implicit in the origins of the two schools. I can create an ideological confessional school, whether Catholic, Evangelical, un-Christian, or anti-Christian, by a political decision. But a school ' under the Gospel ' can arise only where God in His mercy calls Christians to be teachers and imparts His life-creating Word to them and their pupils. Confessional schools can be fought for with political weapons ; schools ' under the Gospel ' can be brought to life by prayer alone."

III. Practical Conclusions

In face of the actual educational situation in Berlin even the Catholic church has not demanded that the Christian confessional school should be the general public school. It must also be borne in mind that the front line of an ideological battle dividing the whole of humanity into two goes right through the heart of Berlin. Nothing could be more foolish than to split and weaken the bridgehead by unleashing a new Kulturkampf in Berlin. But the Catholic Church in Berlin regards its renunciation merely as a postponement and a compromise conditioned by the present political situation. The fact that the Evangelical Church has not demanded the setting up of a Christian confessional school, whether denominational or un-denominational, is the fruit of a new Biblical understanding of the relation between the Church and the world. For her the school is no more than one section of the world that exists outside the school. What the Church has realized anew is that the world cannot be " Christianized " by an alliance of the

Church with the political powers that be. She has seen through and given up the way of Metternich, the "Holy Alliance", the way of a whole century—which was a good way from a Catholic point of view.

This does not mean that the present intention is to contract out of the world. The Church has a mission and a service to perform in the world—in the school world as much as everywhere else. What we have said does not imply a separation of Church and State. But the differentiation between the different spheres of Church and State must be taken seriously—in the schools too; above all in the schools. Spiritual and ecclesiastical aims—and "the permeation of the school with the Christian spirit" is one of them—must and can be pursued, but only (with any prospect of success) in an ecclesiastical and spiritual manner. No kind of compulsion to believe or not to believe must be exerted in the general public school. It is a promising sign that in the classes of our people estranged from the Church who have been fighting for social justice for a century now, glaring cases of social injustice are forgotten sooner or later, whereas an injury suffered for confessional reasons is never forgotten. This alone explains the vehemence with which Parliament debates such details as whether marks for religious instruction should appear in school reports. People do not forget that no master-baker in Berlin would accept as an apprentice any pupil whose school-leaving certificate showed him not to have participated in religious instruction. (Bakers, as is well-known, have always been particularly devout). In planning a new type of school the Evangelical Church must see that the principle of absolute freedom of decision in matters of belief is followed down to the smallest details. All experience gained in Berlin since 1945 confirms this.

Taking the situation as a whole, three types of relationship between Church and school emerge at the present time. Either there is a clear-cut separation between Church and school, as for example in the U.S.S.R. for anti-Church

reasons and in the U.S.A. for (originally) pro-Church reasons ; or the relationship is one of peaceful co-operation on the basis of a State Church (as in the Scandinavian countries and in West Germany too, though only the residue of a State church survives there) ; or there is an encounter, full of tension, but fruitful and genuine. West Berlin has the rare, indeed possibly unique opportunity, of taking this last way and thus establishing a precedent of importance in the history of education. At present everything depends on the Churches and political parties in West Berlin coming to an understanding and refraining from fighting out the problem, so far as the religious and ideological alignment of the schools is concerned, on the level of party politics.

History and church history have taught us to proceed with the utmost caution and with all possible punctiliousness in these supremely delicate questions. It may be that Western Germany can still afford a certain amount of vagueness—but not Western Berlin ! Berlin lies too near the glow of the earth scorched by the Communism which always strikes hardest where the Church has entered into an illegitimate relationship with power and property. By using the word " illegitimate " we imply, of course, that there can also be a " legitimate " relationship, that is, when the Church lets the State alone and the State lets the Church alone (*sein laesst*).

Given this pre-supposition there is no reason why the Church should not accept financial help from the State, in the form of subsidies for such ecclesiastical undertakings as may indirectly accrue to the advantage of the State.

All these considerations are part of the total conception that enables the Evangelical Church in Berlin to consent to the setting up of schools freely available to pupils, teachers, and parents of all religious denominations and creeds. It does so under two conditions only :

(1) that the religious instruction is given exclusively on behalf of and in the name of the Church.

(2) that the Evangelical Church is enabled to establish and maintain a few Church schools, among them an Evangelical grammar-school (Gymnasium), as so-called " experimental schools ".

We shall comment on each of these conditions in turn.

(1) *Why should religious instruction be given exclusively on behalf of the Church ? Why not treat religious instruction as an ordinary subject ?*

(*a*) Religious instruction, given in the name of the Church, and by teachers installed at the intercession and expense of the local church and parish, is like a wave beating from the Church on to the shore of the school. The strength of the wave will depend entirely on the vitality of the local church.

(*b*) Religious instruction, when supported by the local church, plays a much wider part in the life of the school than when it is merely one subject among or isolated from the others.

(*c*) The close ties with the local church will preserve the instruction given in the schools from losing its character of witness. Fed by the church through the *viva vox evangelii* it will remain what it ought to be, a particular form of the Church's preaching mission. In the Gospel itself such instruction implies confrontation with other religions and ideologies, as well as a consideration of man's moral and social responsibilities.

(*d*) Religious instruction as regulated by law in Western Germany is simply an " ordinary subject " and therefore organized by the school authorities. It is true that the teacher of religion has to be sanctioned by the Church, but his commission is from the State and he gives his instruction in the capacity of a State servant. This kind of instruction is in constant danger of becoming estranged from its proper task, not because of the character of the teachers themselves among whom there have always been and are efficient and

sincerely devout men and women ; it lies rather in the fact that they are employed by the State. Without a direct, personal association with the local church the instruction threatens to veer away into a purely intellectual study of religion and ethical theory ; in other words, to become sterile. Where this happens, millions of children, most of whom may never have a chance of learning any better later on, will be given a completely false idea of Christianity.

Christian instruction is one of the Church's precious birthrights. It must not be bartered away to the State for a mess of pottage. At the best, a Christian ideology can be the subject and basis of State religious instruction only alongside or in opposition to other ideologies. And it is a well-known fact that one ideology is as good as another ; we know how easily even a Christian ideology can be exchanged for another, even for an anti-Christian ideology.

(*e*) The total transfer of religious instruction in the schools to the Church is a radical, but the only right, solution. It also represents the only possible means of preventing a recurrence of the old tensions between Church and school, parsons and teachers. In Western Germany teachers and pastors negotiate one with another across a dividing barrier and at present they have many nice things to say about one another. But the Berlin solution takes pastors, teachers and catechists alike into the territory of the Church itself, disciplines them to a common service and makes brothers of them all.

(2) *Why set up Evangelical " experimental schools " in Berlin ?*

(*a*) West Berlin is dominated by the effort to be as like Western Germany as possible. Curiously enough, this is linked with an expectation that a process of Christianization will accompany this adaptation to the West—not least in the schools. The public school will, so it is believed, differ only in non-essentials from the newly founded Evangelical schools and will therefore render them superfluous. Those

who take this line are confusing a process of faith with a purely political change of direction in the education world. They underestimate the law of inertia in the spiritual life and have no idea of the toughness and strength with which the school as a self-contained province can hold itself aloof from extra-mural influences, in particular, the influences of the Church. Only those who bear in mind that the centre of gravity of all school life lies in the school governors and the State, in the teachers' trade unions and the political parties, can accurately estimate how autonomous and cut off from outside spiritual influences the life of a school supported by public funds really can be.

(*b*) The Church is committed to look deeper and must not indulge in any easy illusions ; above all, not in Berlin. Its situation on the dividing-line between two worlds and two ages is far too serious. But if its educational policy is not to get bogged in mere theory but to become really effective the Church must accept the venture of realizing in a tiny school unit the knowledge and experience that has been newly given to it. That is why the small Evangelical Schools are so important.

(*c*) The setting up of the new Evangelical schools is not intended to restore the old Christian confessional schools which we might call Christian ideology schools. The basis of the new schools is a Biblical realism on which both the whole curriculum and the whole community life of the school are based. At a time when school curricula are everywhere being subjected to ideological influences, whether Christian or non-Christian, and directives are issued in which scientific truth is tendentiously falsified, even in a " Christian " sense, the Gospel will here give the specialist teacher freedom to handle matters of fact factually. A school " under the Gospel " will also be preserved from lapsing into a particular type of devoutness. The intention is not to revive the old Pietistic schools. We know that, within the bonds of Christ, the Gospel only makes natural

man the more natural and makes an approach to a full life in the world possible, both in the teaching and common life of the school.

A school which tries to develop in this spirit can be helped by teachers and theologians with the flair for this kind of work; but it is through grace alone that it can succeed. If the experiment succeeds then the Church will be in a position to destroy the caricature of a Christian school and education which survives so stubbornly in the minds of so many teachers and administrators, and to demonstrate by example what it means by a school living " under the Gospel ".

(*d*) Such a school will have what is lacking in the public school of to-day—even in Christian confessional schools—a direct association with the Church. Tests taken at random in any of these " confessional " schools have shown again and again that the Christianity taught usually comes to a purely private religion which makes no absolute demands and often contains amongst other ingredients a feeling of resentful hostility towards the Church. The newly founded Evangelical schools have been so organized from the very beginning as to provide for close personal association with and participation in the life of the local Church and its people. The number of those who have already been drawn into the life of the Church through the existing Evangelical schools is not great; but mere numbers are not important. Please note that we said " numbers "—not " money "! Money plays a great part and cannot be taken too seriously. When the present scheme is completed the Evangelical schools will embrace roughly 100 teachers, 3,000 pupils and 9,000 parents and pupils' brothers and sisters, who will have learnt to answer the question of " Church, School and Home " in closest association with the Church and from its point of view. With its new schools the Church is not simply making a contribution to the general debate on education; it is making an eminently practical intervention in the whole educational system.

(*e*) The financial demands which the development of these Evangelical schools is making on the Church are considerable and require the most careful attention of all the responsible authorities. For our part, we would merely remind them that the intention is to develop the schools step by step and with all due modesty and moderation.

The foundation, development and continuation of the Evangelical schools is an essential and indispensable constituent of the whole educational policy of the Church in Berlin. To give them up now would mean a most serious moral set-back for the Church.

(*Translated by Stanley Godman*) HANS LOKIES.

NICOLAS BERDYAEV— LOVER OF WISDOM

I FIRST met Nicolas Alexandrovitch Berdyaev in 1930, when I called on him in Paris to try to persuade him to come over to England and speak at a conference of British and Russian Orthodox theologians. He was then about fifty-five years of age, slightly built with a massive head and hair worn long at the back after the style of the late Mr. Lloyd George, and a short trim beard. We drank tea and discussed the project while he smoked little short cigars. The conversation proceeded in French with excursions now and then into German when my meagre knowledge of French gave out: he knew next to no English. I confess that at that time I was not fully aware of his distinguished record, for none of his books had as yet been translated into English and a number still remained to be written. I left his house with an impression of a pair of singularly living eyes which lighted up with compassion when his beloved

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cat came into the room—and the promise that later on, perhaps, he might venture over to England if he could give his lectures in French.

A few years later he did come and on that occasion stayed for a day or two in our house, where he was a quite delightful guest. One or two of us who were then on the staff of the Student Christian Movement had tried to fix up appointments for him with some of our leading philosophers and sociologists, and one of these engagements was with a group of professors at the London School of Economics. The group was to include, I remember, Karl Mannheim and Professor Ginsberg and others whom Berdyaev knew either from previous contact on the Continent or from their writings. The Chair was taken by Mr. T. S. Eliot and the proceedings were in French. I cannot now recall anything of the conversation, but something occurred before the meeting which may serve as a text for this article.

A Philosopher's Love Story

In his autobiography, just published,[1] Berdyaev remarks, " Sometimes I have felt that the fate of the world might hang on the outcome of some single meeting or conversation or argument." This was such an occasion and, in preparation for it, I took him along to the barber to have his hair and beard trimmed. He explained what he wanted in French and I translated for the bewildered hairdresser. Then I abandoned him to his fate, arranging for him to be called for later and taken off to the meeting.

A week or so later I had occasion to visit the same barber for my own purposes, and found the man still agog. Who was this man? Where did he live? What did he do? What *sort* of books did he write? And so, as the scissors did their work, I attempted a brief outline of Berdyaev's philosophy. When I had done, my barber friend was

[1] *Dream and Reality*: An Essay in Autobiography. Geoffrey Bles, 30*s*.

silent for a while; then he fetched a deep sigh and said, "I suppose he hasn't written a good love story, has he?" Alas, no! I left the shop with a sense of failure and recounted the story to Berdyaev next time I met him—to his intense amusement!

As I try to write this article, I feel again the comb in my hair and hear the snip of the scissors! Almost I hear the reader's sigh, and the shadow of failure already darkens the path. Yet I have this to encourage me now—that one of the last things Berdyaev did before his death in 1948 was to write his love story; for his autobiography is a classical account of what it means to fall in love with wisdom and to remain faithful to her throughout a long and eventful life. Here is the self-portrait of a philosopher in the literal sense of that word—a lover of *sophia*. I do not think it is any easier to explain now than I found it in the barber's shop—indeed, for ordinary mortals, like my hairdresser and myself, there is bound to be something unintelligible about a man who was so consumed with the passion for truth that he could go on writing when the bombs of revolution were exploding in Moscow in 1917 and when the German *Wehrmacht* was clanking through the streets of Paris in 1940, and who always gave absolute priority to the things of the spirit.

The Spiritual "Individualist"

Lest that should give the impression of an ivory-tower aloofness, here is his own account of his life:—

> "I have lived through three wars, of which two were world-wars, and two revolutions in Russia, that of 1905 and that of 1917; I have lived through the spiritual renascence in Russia at the beginning of the twentieth century, through Russian communism, through the crisis of a whole civilization, through the upheavals in Central Europe, through the collapse of France and her occupation by the German armies; I have lived in exile and my exile has not come to an end. The devastating war on Russian soil was a source of agony for me. And I do not know how all these turmoils and ordeals of the world will end. My life as a philosopher

was under the constant impact of this torrent of events. I have been in prison four times—twice under the old *régime* in Russia and twice under the new ; I was exiled to the north of Russia ; I was brought to trial and threatened with permanent deportation to Siberia ; I was banished from my own country and shall probably end my life in exile. But I have never actively engaged in political activities. I have been deeply involved in many things, yet have never belonged entirely to any one of them. I have never surrendered myself to anything except my creative calling, to which alone the core of my being owes allegiance. Far from having been indifferent to social questions, I have indeed suffered deeply from their impact on me, and my ' social conscience ' seemed never at rest. But in the last analysis and in a still deeper sense I have been non-social. Social movements have never been able to claim my wholehearted allegiance. I have always been a spiritual ' anarchist ' and ' individualist '."

The earlier part of that reads like St. Paul's autobiography in his second letter to the Corinthians ; and, indeed, there is a fundamental kinship in the attitude of the two men to external events—they are both more concerned with a greater and deeper reality than is contained in " the world ". " It is not possible," wrote Berdyaev, " for my faith to be shaken by man, however low he may sink ; for this faith is grounded not on what man thinks about man, but on what God thinks about him."

Aristocrat and Revolutionary

Berdyaev was a Russian aristocrat. His father, a man of deep culture, was an officer in the Imperial Guard, though he retired early from military life to become a leading figure of the nobility centred on Kiev. His mother was Princess Kudashev and she was related to the French nobility through Nicolas' grandmother, the Comtesse Choiseul. He belonged, therefore, to the cultured, a-religious landed gentry of the mid-nineteenth century, and was himself destined for service in the Guards. This vocation was, however, so distasteful to him, that he forsook it early and entered the university to study natural science. His call to philosophy came to

him in boyhood. "I read Schopanhauer, Kant and Hegel when I was fourteen," he says. And it came out of a deep awareness of incompatibility between the "world within" (which was real) and the external world of society (which seemed far less real and was certainly less attractive). To this vocation he remained faithful for the rest of his life. "I have never surrendered myself to anything except my creative calling."

At the University Berdyaev joined the revolutionaries and became a Marxist. This meant the first great rupture of personal relationships which had a decisive effect on him—the break with the nobility. From then onwards to the turn of the century he worked and dreamed and hoped for "the Revolution"; and yet he could never fully identify himself with "the Cause", because there was something he valued more even than social justice, namely, freedom. "I came to realize quite soon that the revolutionary intelligentzia did not really cherish freedom," and it was clear before long that the second break—the break with the revolutionaries—was inevitable. Yet not before he had shown his courage and sincerity by action which led to his arrest, imprisonment and banishment to the north of Russia as a dangerous agitator. The two-and-a-half years he spent in exile with other revolutionary leaders served to define his differences from them and always the issue turned on the place and significance of freedom in the view of man. Much later, when he had become a Christian and sought reconciliation with the Russian Orthodox Church, it was the same issue which could make him write: "All ideological groups, all gatherings of people in pursuit of 'ideals' are known to encroach on and to betray the freedom, independence and creativity of man. . . . Every mass of people banded together is hostile to freedom. . . . If the Church wields authority by driving me into conformity with the collective consciousness of ecclesiastical society I find myself up against the same kind of phenomenon as the ugly but very instructive Moscow trials of the veteran communists." These are harsh words,

but Berdyaev had gone first to the revolutionaries and then to the Church as a man deeply committed in thought and life to the primacy of freedom as a sacred value. It was little wonder that the revolutionaries looked at him askance and the *ancien régime* put him in prison, while the Church resented his criticism.

Before the Revolution

The turn of the century found him in Leningrad (then, of course, St. Petersburg) and later in Moscow in the thick of the spiritual renascence of which he speaks. There were two aspects of this. There was, first, the movement among writers and thinkers which poured itself out in words, argument upon argument; and there was, in the second place, the spiritual awakening among the people which expressed itself in the power of wandering "religious" of all kinds, whether of the Orthodox tradition or of the evangelical sects. Berdyaev had contact with both aspects of the renascence, but naturally he stood more close to the movement among the intellectuals. They met in societies and clubs and at one another's houses and talked far into the night. "Belinsky would say, after an argument had gone on all night: 'We can't go home, we haven't yet decided the question of God.' So it was with us when Bulgakov, Gershenzen, Shestov, Ivanov, Bely and others forgathered." Yet the revolution of 1905—an abortive and pitiful affair—found the intellectuals still arguing, while the crowds in the Moscow streets were at grips with the forces of the State.

This separation between the intelligentzia and the people worried Berdyaev not a little, and he was aware that the real leaders of the revolution were men of cruder mind than those with whom he was most at home. He had friends even among these, but by this time he had moved a long way from orthodox Marxism and was more and more interested in religion. He still desired revolution, because he saw no other way in which Russian society could be purged of oppression, but his own speaking and writing centred on

the basic spiritual issues of man's life and particularly on this perennial problem of freedom. Twelve years later, the revolution came—first in the mild form of Kerensky liberalism (which Berdyaev pillories without mercy) and then in the determined and ruthless form of the Bolshevik dictatorship.

One of his closest friends tells this story of Berdyaev's action during the Revolution :—

> " News had reached us from Petersburg of the outbreak of the Revolution. Crowds filled the streets of Moscow and the most incredible rumours were circulating. The atmosphere was highly charged and an explosion might have occurred at any moment. Berdyaev, my sister and I went out to join the revolutionary crowd which was moving towards the Riding School. As we approached we saw that a huge crowd had already gathered round the Square. The Square itself was occupied by a detachment of soldiers standing ready to shoot. The threatening crowd came nearer and nearer—a closed ring pressing in on the Square. There was a terrible moment in which we expected a volley from the guns and rifles. Just then I turned to say something to Berdyaev—but he was not there. . . . He had pushed his way through the crowd and then through the wire entanglement. We saw him going up to the soldiers and calling on them not to fire on the crowd and not to shed blood. The soldiers did not fire. To this day it is a miracle to me that he was not shot on the spot by the officer in command."

Early Days under Bolshevism

For five years—from 1917 till 1922—Berdyaev lived in Moscow under the Communist government. He was able to go on with his lecturing and made no bones about his criticism of Marxism. " Indeed, the events seemed to provide an additional impetus for activity. I embarked upon an extensive educational plan : I gave lectures, read papers, wrote, discussed and took an active part in the All-Russian Union of writers. I also founded the Free Academy of Moral Science (*Geisteswissenschaft*). The possibility of engaging in such activities is an illustration of the degree of

liberty which the ideological opponents of Bolshevism enjoyed in the first years after the Revolution."

In 1920, despite his well-known anti-Marxist views, Berdyaev was elected Professor of Philosophy in the University of Moscow. " For a year I have lectures in which I openly and without any hindrance criticized Marxism." His house continued to be a centre where people of differing views met and discussed. He was frequently asked to speak to very mixed gatherings, including soldiers of the Red Army, about Christianity and he welcomed all such opportunities. On two occasions, however, he was arrested by the secret police. On the first, after a long and courteous hearing from the Chief of Police, he was set free on condition that he remained in Moscow; but after the second arrest he was kept in prison for two months and then, in company with a whole group of other writers, banished from Russia—not, as he insists more than once, for any political action he had taken or proposed to take, but for " ideological reasons ". The attempt to work in Russia as the apostle of freedom had failed.

Exile

After an unhappy sojourn in Berlin, marked by controversy between the exiled group of writers and the Russian emigrés already gathered there, Berdyaev moved on to Paris, where he lived from 1924 until his death. It was here that he gained that position in international thought which so genuinely surprised him. When his books began to appear in English and in German they aroused great and increasing interest far outside the circles of Russian emigrés (who, indeed, were suspicious of, if not actively hostile to, both the man and his ideas). Writing after the liberation of Paris, when contacts became possible with Russians at the Soviet Embassy, Berdyaev noticed and deplored the complete break in Russian culture which made the friends of his early manhood unknown names to the more intelligent and cultured young Russians with whom he came into contact.

" I could not help feeling the bitter irony of the fact that my own works should be known in Europe, America, Asia and Australia and translated into many languages, while practically no one has ever heard about me in my own country." Yet the reason why he became so well-known in the West is not far to seek : it was due, above all, to the intelligence of the leaders of the Y.M.C.A. and of the World's Student Christian Federation, who helped to get his books published and translated into English. The Y.M.C.A. has a special service in Europe which made the fate of the Russian emigrés its chief concern, and Berdyaev acknowledges handsomely his debt to three people in particular—Paul Anderson, Donald Lowrie, and Gustav Kullman. (It was through the conferences to which these men invited him and through the publications of the Y.M.C.A. Press in Paris that his work and his personality first attracted attention ; and after that the quality of the man himself was such that his position became assured.) His own revolutionary spirit was mildly shocked at the respectable reputation of his later years. " To my surprise and annoyance I find that I am becoming a respected and respectable ' teacher of life '. I should like to assure the readers of this autobiography that I am nothing of the sort. I am only a seeker after truth and rebel who desires freedom from the bondage of life to things, abstractions, ideologies and the fatalism of history."

Berdyaev took little direct part in the Ecumenical Movement and for two main reasons : he remained highly critical of organized religion and he could not, by any stretching of the term, be deemed a ' typical Orthodox ". Yet he played a very important rôle in gatherings in and near Paris where Roman Catholics, Orthodox, and Protestant thinkers met informally during the years between the two wars and where he worked closely with men such as Charles du Bos, Gabriel Marcel, Etienne Gilson, and Jacques Maritain. Another centre, at Pontigny, brought together intellectuals from many other countries besides France and on the widest possible basis of selection, and here also Berdyaev was at home and had his contribution to make.

Berdyaev's Christian Position

It is not the intention of this article to attempt any appraisal of Berdyaev's philosophy: for that I should be utterly incompetent. He claimed to be a Christian philosopher in the sense that he took the Christian position as his starting point; yet he has things to say which will keep the debate going for a long time on the question whether he was a Christian or not. He claimed to be a loyal member of the Russian Orthodox Church, and yet from most of his fellow-members he was separated by a chasm which nothing could bridge. There are at least two excellent little introductions to his thought which deal with his philosophy better than I could—Oliver Fielding Clarke's study, *Introduction to Berdyaev* (Geoffrey Bles, 15s., 1950) and George Seaver's *Nicolas Berdyaev* (James Clarke, 6s., 1950). Incidentally, we owe a debt of gratitude to Geoffrey Bles for their intelligent foresight in publishing most of Berdyaev's books in English translation and to Mr. Fielding Clarke for making the translation of the first substantial one to appear, *Freedom and the Spirit*. His book contains a most useful list of Berdyaev's writings. For the rest, let these quotations from the autobiography serve to indicate the man's approach :—

> "I see myself immersed in the depth of human existence and standing in face of the ineffable mystery of the world and of all that is. And in that situation I am made poignantly and burningly aware that the world cannot be self-sufficient, that there is hidden in some still greater depth a mysterious, transcendent meaning. This meaning is God. Men have not been able to find a loftier name, although they have abused it to the extent of making it almost unutterable. God can be denied only on the surface: but he cannot be denied where human experience reaches down beneath the surface of flat, vapid, commonplace existence" (p. 185).
>
> "If I were to outline briefly my confession of faith which delivered me from atheism, I would say something like this: God reveals himself to the world in the prophets, in the Son, in the Spirit, in his chosen solitaries, men and women who have

attained the summits of spiritual vision and who, while sharing the destiny of the world, do not feel at ease in the world. But God does not dominate this fallen and dejected world. God's revelation to the world and to man is eschatological in character: in other words, it is a revelation of a Kingdom which is not of this world and which signifies that there is no making out anything in relation to this world. I cannot, therefore, apply to God in himself or in his relation to the world the categories of force, power, government, or of anger, jealousy, vengeance, or even justice. While repudiating the application of these anthropomorphic categories to God, I cannot think of divine life except in terms of sacrificial love, of an eternal movement towards the loved one. And this relative anthropomorphism is in turn bound up with a recognition of the central place of man in the world" (p. 175).

"But God is spirit, and he acts within the order of freedom and not of objectified necessity. His activity cannot be understood in naturalistic terms. He is present not in external things and happenings to which we attach divine names and in which we perceive a divine purpose, not in the power or powers of this world, but in truth, beauty, love, freedom, and creativity. This precludes all conceptions of God which make him the subject of power and almighty influences. God has no power: he has less power than a policeman. Power is a social and not a religious phenomenon. And I considered it to be one of my most important tasks as a Christian philosopher to contribute to the purification and liberation of the Christian conscience from the power of sociomorphism. God can reconcile man to the sufferings of creation because he himself suffers, not because he reigns" (p. 179).

"Modern philosophy from Descartes onwards has been in a very definite sense more Christian than medieval scholastic philosophy, since Christianity had not as yet sufficiently pervaded and modified the mind of the scholastics, and their intellectual terms of reference and their mentality belonged to the pre-Christian, ancient Graeco-Roman universe of discourse . . . Christian philosophy is pre-eminently a philosophy of the subject, not of the object, a philosophy of man, not of the world with its unending determinations" (p. 104).

"I have always believed that life in God is freedom, untrammelled flight, anarchy in the true sense of the word. . . .

> Truth is spiritual conquest : it is known in and through freedom. . . . There is no authority in the world which has power to constrain me to truth. I cannot be liberated by force " (p. 53).
>
> " The only conception of freedom which I found satisfactory was that of Jacob Boehme, whose writings I came to appreciate more and more, and about whom I later wrote a number of essays. I do not claim to be true to Boehme in every respect, but I regard his teaching concerning the *Ungrund* as susceptible of my own interpretation, and I identified *Ungrund* with primordial freedom which precedes all ontological determination " (p. 99).

Philosopher of Freedom

The last quotations are sufficient to indicate that when Berdyaev speaks of freedom he has in mind something more than mere " free will " : he conceived of creation as proceeding out of a state of untrammelled freedom and of man as belonging by right of birth to this state—as, indeed, coming forth from freedom and returning thither. Thus his defence of freedom is something inseparable from his view of man. And wherever he conceived freedom to be threatened, wherever he saw man subjected to necessity—whether in Church or state, in the home or in the city—there he was bound to make his protest. This explains his radical attitude, for instance, to divorce :—

> " The real question is not of the right to divorce (a right which I believe to be beyond question) but of the duty of divorce when love is no more. The perpetuation of marriage without love is immoral, for love alone, love of *eros* and of pity, can vindicate human relationships " (p. 72).

It is difficult to form a true judgment of Berdyaev because his style is so different from any western style. As Mr. Fielding Clarke points out, he does not put tentative conclusions in the form of questions but rather as statements ; and one has the feeling at times that his more violent statements belong to spheres where he is least certain of his own final judgment. Yet it is clear from the above arbitrary selections

from his autobiography that if he is right then the rest of us have got to think again. And that is all he would wish. He felt himself far removed from the rôle of a university professor. His philosophy was his life—and as highly personal as his life. None of his books satisfied him: they were significant for him only as a partial record of the spiritual struggle of the man Nicolas Berdyaev in his search for truth. "All my life I have been trying to hammer out a philosophy of freedom." And to the very end he remained a rebel.

ERIC FENN.

REVIEW

Florence Allshorn and the Story of St. Julian's. By J. H. Oldham. S.C.M. Press, 12s. 6d.

Here is one of the most rewarding biographies that has appeared in recent years and yet with nothing spectacular about it. It is rich, not in events but in wisdom. A C.M.S. Missionary, a warden of a Missionary training college, the founder of a "spiritual-holiday-centre"—what could be more unexciting? And yet the book grips and will not let go. The secret of it is twofold: Florence Allshorn's spiritual penetration, and the clean, vigorous prose of her letters, addresses, and other writings. If we must classify, we shall call her a Catholic Evangelical; but better, perhaps, a poet in living. And she was great enough to delegate while still alive, and for her community to survive now that she has moved on.

M. J. K. (C.R.).

LETTERS TO THE EDITORS

INFLATION

Dear Sirs,

The other day as my broom chased the dust around the floor, random thoughts provoked by Mr. J. M. Ross's letter in your February issue were chasing each other around in my mind. A vacuum cleaner would, I fear, be classed as a luxury by Mr. Ross, and ought, therefore, to be boycotted by an earnest Christian. If there is any spiritual value in taking longer to do a poorer job of housework with a broom, then I fail to see it. I have three small children and no domestic help at all. Every day of my life I regret the things I cannot do for and with my children, and I regret the community activities in which I cannot take part for lack of time. If washing machines, ironers, refrigerators and vacuum cleaners make available more woman-hours for spiritual, cultural, recreational and service activities, then we would be fools to turn our backs on them.

My husband and I were greatly pleased when your magazine began publication, because the passing of the *Christian News-Letter* had left a serious gap in our reading. We find in your articles much food for thought and discussion.

Is there a group of the Christian Frontier Council giving any thought to the vocation and problems of the wife and mother? I, for one, should welcome some discussion of this subject.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs.) James F. Shilton.

United Church of Canada.
Wolseley, Sask.

GERMANY AND EUROPE

Dear Sirs,

I have been deeply concerned by the February issue of *The Frontier*, with its several comments on the German situation, particularly on the question of re-arming. In what follows I am not seeking to strengthen Professor Gollwitzer's arguments nor to oppose yours; but it seems to me that it would be better to shift the discussion to new ground.

Upon the purely utilitarian, power side of the problem, I believe British public opinion is largely determined by the strength that the German army has shown in two world wars. But the German is a good soldier only when he has enthusiastic confidence in an idea. This he had in both wars, in each case losing it towards the end, and the double breakdown shows that he could hardly stand up to the trials of a war with Russia under the presumably very difficult military conditions of its opening phase. Meanwhile a German army would be more likely to revive at least some of the evils fostered by Nazism (which Germany's new allies would be practically incapable of checking) than to develop what were the best qualities of the German soldier. I do not wish to over-state this argument but I think it should be taken seriously.

To rise to a higher level—that of national re-education—I have found for the first time, during the last year or so, hopeful signs of the awakening of a genuinely independent public opinion in Germany; which means that the nation is entering upon a task hitherto unknown to it. When leaving England five years ago I always pointed to this task lying ahead. In the Germany of 1951–52 I have found some splendid characters, the more valuable for having triumphed over a bad tradition, equally aware of the mistakes of both Germany and of the Western nations since 1945. Their influence is slowly increasing, but it could easily be halted by a remilitarization, especially such as Adenauer is now offering. There is a great difference between making a military contribution now, and one later at the end of a queue of European nations, if that becomes quite inevitable for defence. Niemöller himself insists that he would not obstruct rearmament if there were a Western demand for it after the building up of a European army, in face of an increasing menace from the East. The difference is psychological and therefore important for the education of the nation.

Lastly, upon Christian grounds, I have heard no one, certainly not Niemöller or Heinemann, contest political or military necessity in point of principle. Hardly any of us represent any kind of dogmatic pacifism. We conceive such questions in, so to speak, existential terms, as matters of conscience. But we do follow the line of the Bekennende Kirche in the hope of transforming Germany as well as German relations with other nations. Our only possible line of action in this tension between Europe and Russia is that of confession, never doubting that Russians, as well as Germans, however non-Christian

or even atheistic they may be in the mass, are powerless against Christian witness. The spiritually defensive attitude of the Bolshevists (outwardly aggressive though they are even in Europe) is shown by the astonishing position of our church in the Eastern zone. That position might, we know, deteriorate any day, but there is yet no sign of its doing so. We all—and I especially—would be sorry if the standpoint we have taken grieved any friends in England. We should on both sides be most anxious to test our attitudes in a situation that is so rapidly shifting, both politically and spiritually; and in that sense I feel much indebted to criticism from your side. So, I hope, do others, but I have said only what seems significant to me.

HANS EHRENBERG.

ENGLAND'S FOURTH RELIGION

DEAR SIRS,

As a member of "England's Fourth Religion", I was naturally interested in Mr. Newell's problems, but I feel that he himself, perhaps unconsciously, has supplied one strong reason which prevents us from "coming right into" the Church, on the skirts of which we are said to keep a hand.

It is this typical attitude of self-righteousness that repels: the pitying assumption that it is not for us to appreciate the austerity and profound Christian theology of the Prayer Book, and that it is the elect, in Church, who give "worship and praise", while the adherents of the Fourth Religion can only "crouch". Thus the twentieth century Pharisee maintains his traditional role.

The writer has given so much attention to his picture of our mental and spiritual limitations that he has left himself little room to be constructive, save in brief references to "challenge" and "offensive" which do not seem to have emerged beyond the planning stage; and to "all the best cards" which Christianity holds, but does not seem to play. One of these is said to be "the secret of true community", but surely the secret has been well kept; for if this "vivid community life" was to be found among the more orthodox church-goers, would not its radiance have been visible even to our dim sight? And would

not their "creative activity and gaiety" have spread their influence to commerce and the council chamber, and, perhaps, even helped to soften the asperities of Westminster itself?

Finally, if the Church must be required to shed tears over our sorry state, why should all the blame be laid upon "sin and negligence in past generations"? Surely those who live now must be equally, if not more, responsible? And could they not take a leaf out of the Communist's book and set to work?

In the meanwhile I shall refuse to succumb to the challenge of Communist or Pharisee, but stick to my own deplorable guns.

Yours faithfully,

R. W. OLDHAM.

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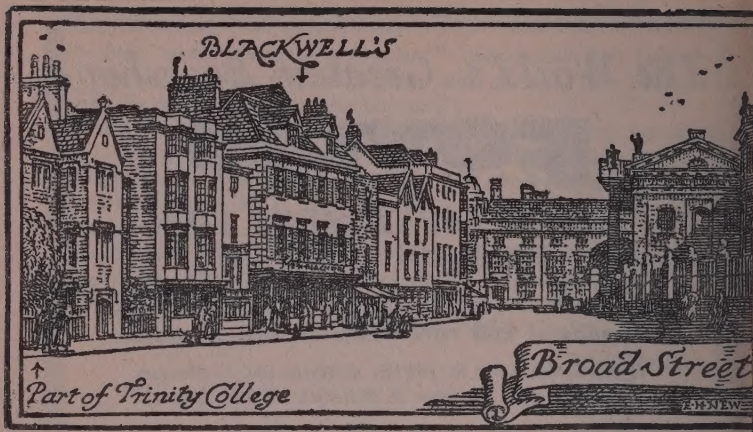

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